ROPE WILLIAM F 79 BUENOS AIRES 573

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CONTIDENTIAL BUENOS AIRES 573

FOR ASST SECT VAKY E.O. 12065: XDS-1 1-19-09 (CASTRO, RAUL H.) OR-M TAGS: SHUM. AR

SUBJECT: (C) CLARIFICATION OF NUMBER OF DISAPPEARED PERSONS

SUBJECT: (C) CLI...

REF: BUENOS AIRES 0461

1. (C- ENTIRE TEXT)

2. WHEN IS USED THE FIGURE 55 PERSONS DISAPPEARING FER WITH GENERAL VIOLA I MEANT IT TO BE ILLUSTRATIVE AND I WAS GENEROUS. I WILL ADMIT, IN MY CALCULATIONS. THESE CALCULATIONS ARE BEASED UPON: 1) THE NUMBER OF PERSONS ACTUALLY

THE EMBASSY TO HAVE DISAPPEARED; 2) AN ESTIMATED SERVING FAMILY SERVING

MEMBERS (OFTEN VIA FAMILIES IN THE UNITED STATES. WHO SUB-SEQUENTLY WRITE TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS OR HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS OUTSIDE ARGENTINA); AND 3) AN ESTIMATED "NOT REPORTED TO US" FACTOR -- I.E. WE ESTIMATE DISAPPEARANCES

INVARIABLY HIGHER THAN THOSE ACTUALLY REPORTED TO THIS EMBASSY BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT ONLY A PRECENTAGE

(WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT PERCENTAGE) ARE REPORTED TO US. CONFIDENTIAL

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Department of PAGE 02 BUENOS ØØ573 1921567 3. TO ELABORATE ON POINT TWO ABOVE: WHEN WE REPORTED NUMBERS OF DISAPPEARANCES IN NOVEMBER 1978 (BUENOS AIRES 9209) WE LISTED SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER DIS-APPEARANCES REPORTED TO US AH THE TIXME AS 22 AND 17. THESE NOW STAND AT 31 AND 23. AND THERE ALWAYS EXISTS THE POSSI-BILITY OF COURSE THHAT OTERS WILL BE ADDED LATER.
4. WE REGRET THE "ELASTICITY" OF THIS KIND OF REPORTING. BUT THE FACT IF THAT WHEN WE REPORTED LATS AUGUST DISAPPEARANCES FOR THE YEAR IN PROGRESS (1978 BUENOS AIRES 6527) THE AVERAGE PER MONTH APPEARED TO STAND AT 23. WHEN IN NOVEMBER WE REPORTED JANUARY-OCTOBER DATA (1978 BUENOS AIRES 9209) THE AVERAGE STOOD AT 38.

5. TOTAL DISAPPEARANCES FOR 1978 PRESENTLY REPORTED TO THE EMBASSY STAND AT 450 -- WHICH WOULD APPEAR TO MAINTAIN THE LAST REPORTED AVERAGE OF 38 PER MONTH. DURING NOVEMBER AND ECEMBER HOWEVER ONLY 15 DIS-APPEARANCES WERE REPORTED (8 IN NOVEMBER AND 7 IN CONFIDENTIAL

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CONFIDENTIAL / EXDIS OR ONLY DECEMBER). REALISTIC ESTIMATES MUST CONSIDER THE LIKELIHOOD OF SUBSEQUENT REPORTS. TO SPECULATE THEN THAT A FINAL AVERAGE MONTHLY FIGURE FOR DISAPPEARANCES IN 1978 WILL BE AT 38-42 DOES NOT, WE BELIEVE, STRETCH THE IMAGINATION -- NOR DOES IT SEEM THAT AN ADDITIONAL PROVISION FOR 13-17 UNREPORTED CASES IS LIKELY TO BE TOO FAR FROM REALITY. 6. FOR AS LONG AS WE CANNOT GET PRECISE STATISTICS--AND WE HAVE NO IDEA THAT THIS WILL EVER BE POSSIBLE ---OUR ESTIMATES MAY APPEAR TO ERR ON THE SIDE OF HIGH NUMBERS, EVEN THOUGH WE WILL DEFEND THESE ESTIMATES CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BUENOS 00573 192156Z AS THE BEST AVAILABLE IN A VIRTUALLY INSCRUTABLE SITUATION. EVEN WHEN WE USE ESTIMATES THAT ARE ON THE HIGH SIDE, HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS, WHO USE DATA THAT WE BELIEVE ARE OFTEN LESS SOLID THAN OUR OWN, MAKE CHARGES THAT WE ARE NOT AWARE OF THE DEPTH OF THE DISAPPEARANCES PROBLEM HERE. CASTRO CONFIDENTIAL.

85D366 HA Subject Files

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